

Quality of the Administrative Record Data Used in the 2020 Census

Discussant:

Inderdeep Chatrath, Ph.D

(NAC member)

Consultant

***Assistant Vice President (retired) Office for Institutional Equity
Duke University and Duke University Health System***

**National Advisory Committee 2022 Spring Virtual Meeting
May 5-6, 2022**

Positive steps taken in use of Administrative Records

- The Census Bureau should be commended for its transparency in providing insight into the use of Administrative Records (ARs) including:
 - The process of closing out cases through Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU)
 - The types of ARs used
 - Use of past Census surveys to impute data characteristics that generally do not change (Race and Hispanic origin) or can be tracked if they do change (age)
- The Bureau also clearly is prioritizing efforts to improve the quality of ARs for future surveys

Positive steps taken in use of ARs (cont.)

- Census staff are working with community partners and tribes to:
 - Identify high quality ARs not presently used by the Census Bureau
 - Encouraging tribal, state and local governments and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to provide access to those records
- Efforts to improve the quality of ARs used by the Census Bureau have led to initiatives to facilitate Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to limit the use of ARs and protect the privacy of information in those ARs
 - Example: Work with tribal governments to obtain records that are higher quality than other available records, such as tribal enrollment records and health records

Questions: Use of ARs in the 2020 Census

- Slide 68 indicates that ARs were used to update address records in the Master Address File (MAF)
 - How many records were updated in the MAF as a result of using ARs in the 2020 Census?
 - What percentage of records updated in the MAF in the 2020 Census are in:
 - Update Leave areas?
 - Update Enumerate areas?
 - Remote Alaska areas?

Questions: Use of ARs in the 2020 Census

- Slide 69 identifies sources of high quality ARs
 - How recent are those ARs (e.g., tax year(s) for the federal tax returns that were used)?
 - Is there a process for purging ARs as more updated records become available, and if so, what is that process?
 - What other federal agencies are the source of ARs?
 - Agencies providing immigration records?
 - EEO-1 forms from businesses?
 - Are the individuals whose ARs are used by the Census Bureau informed that their records can be used for that purpose? Can individuals opt out?

Questions: Use of ARs in the 2020 Census

- **Slide 70** identifies AR determination for the percentage of Hispanic population by block group. Can similar data be provided by race and ethnic subgroups?

Questions: Use of ARs in the 2020 Census

- The Census presentation identifies how ARs were used in **NRFU** for households receiving mail (**slides 73 and 74**) – among those households for which ARs were used to impute characteristics:
 - What percentage had non-traditional mailing addresses and did not receive any of the mailings identified on **slide 73**?
 - What percentage had a head of household who was a person of color (that is, anyone who is not Non-Hispanic White)?
 - What percentage had one or more children aged five and under?
 - What percentage were in Update Leave areas? Update Enumerate areas? Remote Alaska areas?

Questions: Use of ARs in the 2020 Census

- Slide 75 depicts how ARs fit into the NRFU full-contact strategy.
 - What percentage of NRFU cases were closed out using ARs?
 - What percentage of group quarters cases were closed using ARs?
 - Among those NRFU cases closed out by ARs:
 - What is the breakdown, by percentage, of the number of attempted contacts (e.g., percentages with 1, 2, 3 or 4 contacts)?
 - What percentage of proxy interviews were supplemented by data from ARs?

Closing Thoughts and Recommendations

- ARs play an important role in filling in the gaps for missing or incomplete survey responses, or reconciling multiple responses
- In recognizing the need for high quality ARs, it is important that the Census Bureau:
 - Not use ARs as a substitute for improving its efforts to obtain self-responses from historically undercounted populations
 - Not use ARs as a short-cut to close out NRFU cases
- ARs should be available as a “fail-safe” measure to be only used, if necessary, with the goal to obtain a 100 percent count through self-response or direct interviews in NRFU

Closing Thoughts and Recommendations

- The Census Bureau should enhance its transparency by publishing detailed data describing the use of ARs in decennial, ACS, and other annual and periodic surveys
 - Those descriptions should identify the source and ages of the ARs and their limitations
 - Population counted by use of ARs should be broken down by race, ethnic sub-groups, age and housing tenancy

Closing Thoughts and Recommendations

- The Census Bureau should attempt to improve access to high quality ARs by:
 - Better educating tribes, NGOs and other non-federal sources of how they are used and protected
 - Tribal consultations to resolve concerns about data sovereignty
 - Streamlining the process and means by which ARs are produced to the Census Bureau
 - Improve the process of negotiating, reviewing and implementing MOUs

Comments and Committee Discussion

